

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 DEAE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 IO-13
JUSE-00 NSAE-00 SNM-02 TRSE-00 USIA-06 NSC-05
OES-06 OMB-01 /063 W
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R 281453Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 2872
DEA HQS WASHDC
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 2715

ANKARA FOR NCO R.D. WARNER

PARIS FOR NCO R.D. PICINI

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SNAR SY LE
SUBJ: OPIUM CULTIVATION BEKAA VALLEY LEBANON

REF: DAMASCUS 1145 (NOTAL)

1. NCO SUTTER MET WITH SYRIAN NARCOTIC POLICE APRIL 27
TO DISCUSS FURTHER OPIUM CULTIVATION IN BEKAA AREA OF
LEBANON. SYRIANS WERE NOT ABLE TO PROVIDE ACCURATE ESTIMATE
OF 1977 CROP PLANTINGS, BUT HAD SOME FAIRLY HARD INFORMA-
TION ON WHAT THEY DESCRIBED AS 1976 TEST CROP AND INDIVIDUALS
PRESENTLY INVOLVED WITH OPIUM CULTIVATION AND TRAFFICKING.

2. SYRIAN INFORMANT SOURCES REVEAL THAT PROBABLY UP TO
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1000 DUNOMS (ONE HECTARE EQUALS TEN DUNOMS) WERE PLANTED
IN OPIUM IN 1976 AS EXPERIMENTS. ON AVERAGE, EACH DUNOM
YIELDED 4 KILOS OF OPIUM GUM. FIRST REFINING STEP
OF GUM IN TURN YIELDED ONE KILO OF BASE PER EIGHT
KILOS OF GUM. THIS WOULD BE ROUGHLY 500 KILOS OF BASE
MAXIMUM FOR 1976 CROP.

3. SYRIANS BELIEVE THAT MOST OF 1976 CROP BOUGHT
BY ELIAS AL-ANTOURI,
BRAZILIAN OF LEBANESE ORIGIN.
LEBANESE MIDDLEMAN WORKING WITH AL-QANTOURI IDENTIFIED
BY SYRIANS IS MOHAMMAD MELHEM QASSEM. NO MORE DATA
ON TWO PRESENTLY AVAILABLE.

4. SYRIANS SAY THAT ON BASIS OF LAST YEAR'S EXPERIMENT,
LEBANESE WITH TURKISH HELP, HAVE DECIDED TO PLANT
GREATER HECTARAGE USING TRANSPLANT METHOD FROM SEED
BEDS RATHER THAN BROADCAST METHOD OF PLANTING.
TRANSPLANTING SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY END OF JUNE AND
SYRIANS FEEL THEY SHOULD THEN HAVE GOOD IDEA OF HECTAR-
AGE INVOLVED WITH 1977 CROP. IN ADDITION TO DEIR
AL-AHMAR AREA WHICH SYRIAN AGENTS WERE UNABLE TO VISIT
ON ACCOUNT OF ARMED CHRISTIAN ELEMENTS, SYRIANS BELIEVE
PLANTINGS WILL TAKE PLACE IN FOLLOWING BEKAA VILLAGES:

TARYA, TABHA, SH'AT, YUNIN, HOR TAQLA, BRITAL, AND
REYAQ. AGENTS HAVE OBSERVED PERSONALLY SEEDLINGS IN
LATTER VILLAGES.

5. REPORTED PRICE FOR 1976 GUM WAS 400 LEBANESE POUNDS
PER KILO. OTHER NAMES MENTIONED IN TRAFFICKING ARE
MUHAMMAD HAMIEH AND HUSSEIN HAMIEH, BOTH LEBANESE,
AND TURKISH KURD, RAMDAN SEIFO.

6. SYRIANS BELIVE MOST OF 1976 CROP HAD ALREADY
LEFT LEBANON FOR EUROPE. THEY SPECULATE LOGICAL
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DESTINATION OF BASE FOR FURTHER REFINING TO BE
MARSEILLE.

7. AS MORE INFORMATION IS DEVELOPED, IT WILL BE
PASSED ON TO ADDRESSEES.
THEROS

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Message Attributes

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